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ABSTRACT

These guidelines for a health and sex education curriculum in Denmark outline the curriculum's aims and content. The aim of the instruction is to qualify pupils to further their own health and that of others, to contribute to pupils' knowledge of human health and the importance of life conditions and lifestyle to health, to develop pupils' understanding of different forms of relationships, and to develop the pupils' ability to assess ethical questions. The guidelines emphasize the influence of pupils' advance conceptions of health and lifestyles. Curriculum content is presented within three themes: personal growth and development, forms of relationships, and alcohol. Within these themes, specific topics covered include: health and sickness; friendship; sexual identity and sexuality; stress; sexually transmitted diseases and acquired immune deficiency syndrome; pregnancy, contraception, and abortion; body, exercise, and movement; food; alcohol, drugs, and tobacco; housing environment; work environment; external environment; and peace in the world. Each theme is treated from the following five perspectives: the importance of the physical and mental health of the human being, connections with the conditions of life, connections with lifestyle, ethical questions and considerations, and possibilities of action with a view to changes in the conditions of life and in lifestyle. (JDD)

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1. Aims

1. (1) The aim of the instruction shall be to qualify the pupils to further their own health and that of others - in cooperation with others as well as on their own.

(2) The instruction shall be contributory to the pupils acquiring knowledge of and insight into:

- the physical, psychological and social sides of human health and the interaction between these,
- the importance of the conditions of life to health in relation to social, economic, cultural and environmental aspects,
- the importance of the lifestyle to health and conditions playing a role for the development of the lifestyle,
- connections between sexuality and physical, psychological and social health,
- ethical dimensions in health and sex-related questions.

(3) The instruction shall contribute to develop the pupils' understanding of different forms of relationships, and at the same time it shall support the individual in the development of his own identity.

(4) The instruction shall furthermore contribute to the development of the pupils' ability to assess ethical questions together with others, and it shall contribute to the development of their self-respect and courage.

2. Contents

The curriculum is connected with the above aim which is first and foremost to increase the pupils' ability to act in relation to their own health and to that of others. In order to meet that aim, the pupils must acquire knowledge and insight, and they must furthermore acquire a number of general skills such as self-confidence and the ability of decision-making and cooperation.

The Value of the Pupils' own Conceptions of Health

The contents of the instruction shall be elaborated in an interaction between the below-mentioned themes and the conceptions of health which the pupils already have. These advance conceptions must be taken seriously, as they reflect the world in which the pupils have grown up and thus the different lifestyles which the pupils have been acquainted with.

The success of health education is therefore conditional upon it being linked with these pupil conceptions. If the threat to health which takes up most of the pupils' own universe happens to be the risk of an atomic war, this may be part of the explanation why the diet instruction does not make any great impression on the eating habits of the pupils. The instruction must on the one hand be linked to the pupils' conceptions of health and on the other hand it must contribute to developing and qualifying these conceptions.

Tobacco	Body Exercise Movement	Peace in the world
Health Sickness	External environment	Drugs
Alcohol	Working environment	Housing Environment
Forms of relationships	Food	Personal growth Development

The Total Perspective

Each theme shall be treated in a given context so that as many aspects of the aim as possible are treated in each individual theme. It will for instance often be the case that a theme is linked both to lifestyle and conditions of life. It is of great importance that the current themes are treated in such a way that they are related to the individual pupil and his situation. It must be endeavoured that the following five *perspectives* are elucidated for each individual theme:

1. The importance for the physical and mental health of the human being.
2. Connections with the conditions of life.
3. Connections with the lifestyle.
4. Ethical questions and considerations.
5. Possibilities of action with a view to changes in the conditions of life and in lifestyle. This is elucidated in relation both to individual and to collective actions, and importance is attached to including the class, the school, the family and society.

Themes and Perspectives

The 3 examples listed below indicate how *the individual themes* can be treated in connection with *the five perspectives.*

1. Personal Growth and Development

The personal development has consequences both for a person's physical and mental health. In this theme, the class must therefore work with these connections as well as with how the personal development depends on lifestyle and conditions of life.

The possibility of positive growth depends both on the self-understanding and on the self-confidence of the individual and on his conditions of life. There is for instance a difference between whether one lives in a secure social and economic framework or in an environment where insecurity and uncertainty form part of the daily life.

When working with this theme, questions relating for instance to the development of the identity (Who am I? What can I do? What do I want to do?) must be taken up, and questions implying ethical considerations and personal choices must be discussed. The question of what may for instance be understood by a good sex life is closely linked with these considerations, and the answer presupposes that the individual has a sufficient knowledge of himself and understands his co-responsibility for other people's lives, which is an underlying factor in all human relations.

Also the possibility of handling stress is closely linked to the lifestyle of the individual person and to his understanding of himself and his conditions. Does he for instance understand to say no, does he have the ability to use family and friends to talk the situation over with etc.

When it comes to health-promoting activities, it is a question both of creating a stimulating external framework for the personal development and of developing those abilities

and "skills" which are necessary for a healthy and good life, e.g. the ability to solve conflicts, and the abilities of cooperation, decision-making and formulation.

2. Forms of Relationships

Under this theme, the class shall work with questions relating to how people's relationships and sexuality have consequences on their physical and mental health. There are many forms of relationships which are all important for the mental and social part of health. Sexuality may express itself in many ways, and it is an important dimension of a healthy life. And the emotional aspect is not the least central aspect in this context. It is therefore important to work with questions relating to the ways in which the sexuality is given the best possible conditions in a person's life.

Relationships and sexuality can have great negative consequences on the physical side of health. AIDS can be mentioned as the most serious consequence. But also different sexually transmitted diseases which may i.a. lead to sterility can be mentioned as serious consequences. Finally, early pregnancies and abortions - i.a. among very young women - are things that may have serious - both physical and psychological- consequences for the health of those involved. It is therefore necessary to work with the many possibilities there are to avoid that these problems occur. Knowledge about body functions and body development is a prerequisite for avoiding these problems.

At the same time, it is important to include aspects of how conditions of life can be of importance for the development of personal relationships and sexuality. The organization and quality of the housing and the psychological costs of working life can be mentioned as conditions which exert an influence on relationships and sexuality. Unequality between the sexes can be seen as a phenomenon which is maintained in many places of our education system, in working life and in our daily life together.

Prostitution can be seen as a phenomenon which is often developed under extremely unfavourable conditions of life. Ethics and values are questions of equality and discrimination and furthermore of conditions and opportunities which society offers for the solution of these problems.

In connection with the question of how we let our sexuality express itself, it is important to be aware of the fact that this may both be of consequence to our own and other people's health. Rape and incest can be mentioned as extreme examples of violation of other people's health, but also milder forms of pressure and the ability to say yes and no are important aspects. Values and ethical considerations in this context concern the responsibility for other people's health.

The action perspective concerns the possibilities of the individual for developing his sexuality and relations to others, so that the consideration of his own and other people's health is included. But it also concerns the possibilities that exist for exerting an influence on the societal framework in order to reduce the problems relating to for instance discrimination and prostitution.

3. Alcohol

Under the theme: alcohol, the class can work with questions of how alcohol may both exert an influence on the physical and on the psychological dimension of health. Which organs and functions are influenced in the short and in the long term, what does alcohol mean for interpersonal relations, and for a person's judgement in different situations etc.

At the same time, alcohol consumption should be related both to how we choose to live our lives ourselves (lifestyle) and to that social and financial framework which influences this consumption (the conditions of life).

The ethical considerations may deal with the use by the alcohol industry of commercials in their sales promotion, group pressure at parties and get-togethers etc.

The action perspective, where the emphasis is laid on the solution of the alcohol problems of society, deals with how a person can himself obtain a reasonable relationship to alcohol and how a person can exert an influence on the societal development in a direction which makes the "need" for alcohol decrease, in particular among the groups with the greatest problems. Both individual and collective possibilities of action must be included in the instruction.

By treating the five perspectives for each of the proposed themes, the individual themes can be seen as examples which individually contribute to meeting the overall aims of the instruction.

Elaboration of Themes

In the following, a number of catch words will be used to elaborate on the individual themes. In spite of the fact that they are defined separately, they have many points in common. There is for instance a connection between the possibility of personal development, social intercourse and security and a person's life in the work and housing environment. And there is a connection between pollution of the external environment and the quality of food. As a third example we can mention the connection between sex life and physical and psychological work pressure. The following themes should therefore be considered as a framework and a point of departure for the pupils' and teachers' joint discussion regarding the planning of the instruction.

a. Health and Sickness

- health and sickness concepts
- the WHO and the "Health for All"-Strategy
- health-oriented inequalities in Denmark: sexual, social, geographical etc.
- health-oriented inequalities between industrialized countries and developing countries
- the health service in Denmark
- health policies.

b. Personal Growth and Development

- social intercourse, friendships, security, collectivity and cooperation
- self-understanding and self-confidence
- sexual identity
- group pressure
- sexuality and sex life
- stress and the handling of stress
- nature and culture experiences.

c. Forms of Relationships

- different forms of relationships
- the family and its conditions
- sex roles and parent roles
- infatuation and love
- pregnancy, contraception and abortion
- AIDS
- sexually transmitted diseases.

d. Body, Exercise and Movement

- the functions, development and maintenance of the body
- exercise, dance and movement
- puberty and sexual differences
- body consciousness and relaxation
- sport, sport heroes, mass/élite sports

e. Food

- digestion
- the quality and nutritious value of food
- food production
- food cultures

f. Alcohol

- alcohol habits and cultures
- alcohol and behaviour
- alcohol, traffic and safety
- alcohol advertisements

g. Drugs
- hashish, heroin, medicin etc. and addiction
- production and distribution channels
- drug environments and drug-related prostitution

h. Tobacco
- smoking habits, gender and social conditions
- organizations for and against smoking
- tobacco industry and production
- tobacco advertisements

i. Housing Environment
- Interior decoration
- Building materials
- Climate and hygiene of housing
- Housing areas
- Urban ecology
- Connection between housing and work
- Housing policies

j. Work Environment
- Physical work environment
- Psychological work environment
- Sex roles, gender and profession
- Sickness, mortality and profession
- Unemployment

k. External Environment
- Local environmental problems
- Global environmental problems
- Drug circuits in local community and school
- Local and international environmental movements

l. Peace in the World
- War threat
- Anxiety and security
- Weapon technology and production
- Peace and détente
- Enemy images and international understanding.

The Instruction at Different Form Levels:

Studies indicate that children and adolescents in different form levels to a great extent worry and think about the same health matters, but that they express themselves in different concepts and at different abstraction levels. Although the instruction must be organized differently in the different form levels, it is nonetheless very important and urgent that the classes work with all themes throughout the whole period of schooling.

When the instruction is linked to the pupils' own conceptions, it will however often prove to be natural to treat certain topics at certain times during the period of schooling: The older pupils will for instance often be more preoccupied with working conditions and work environment, whereas the pupils in the 6th and 7th forms will be interested in the development of the body, sexuality and the differences between the sexes.

Other topics will have the pupils' interest throughout the whole period of schooling. This is for instance the case with pollution. There is however a great difference in the way in which this topic can be treated in the different phases of the period of schooling. Whereas it may for instance - in the case of the older pupils - be relevant to deal with the European Community's importance for the development within the environmental area, and with how a person as a citizen has a possibility of exerting an influence on this development, it is of course necessary to work with other approaches when it comes to the younger pupils. Here it is for instance possible to include the action perspective by working with utopias with regard to what the pupils would like the society or local community of the future to look like. This may for instance be done in the form of drawings, models, plays etc.

It may however vary from school to school, and the safest leading principle will therefore be to link the instruction to those ideas and conceptions which the pupils have and subsequently to work with them in the mentioned total perspective.

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